

The allegory of the cave analysis

Profession, Teacher



In "The allegory of the Cave" Plato argues that education is not a matter of making the blind to see but of turning the learner "in the right direction." What he means by this is that education is not about feeding someone information and expecting them to take it as the truth. It is about encouraging them to seek out the truths in the world around them, and helping them acquire the tools to do so. This point is extremely relevant to education today, which is mostly about test scores, and textbooks when it should be about helping students think creatively and encouraging them search for the truths in their lives. In a lot of schools now students are required to take "standardized tests" and are evaluated solely on how they (the students and the school in total) did on these exams. As a result the teachers are encouraged to teach exactly what is going to be on the exams and that's it. They present this information to you, and basically ask you to remember it even if you don't fully understand it. This is not education it is memorization, you are not actually learning anything just remembering what they told you and regurgitating it at a later date. Their main tool in "educating" these students is the textbook. In a lot of places the textbook that the standardized tests are based off of are the "end-all, be-all" of information. Any thoughts contrary to those in the textbook are wrong because the tests say that it's wrong. Even in math if you get an answer right but you don't show your work, or you do it in a manner other than that which you were taught, the teacher will mark it wrong because that is not the way the textbook shows so it would be wrong on the test. This does not help a student at all; it is actually telling them that it is bad to think any other way than the way they have taught you. Now imagine that instead of

telling student that everything is either right or wrong they were given a chance to decide for themselves. Instead of telling student what they have to learn and when they had to learn it, you give them ideas to think about and encourage them to find their own answers. The students would be able to go out in to the world and not automatically assume that what they see with their eyes is the whole truth. They would be able to look past the shadows and truly see the bright light. Education is not about feeding someone information and expecting them to take it as the truth. It's about helping students think creatively and giving them the tools to search for the truth. The real truth not the truth you were told by someone else. Education is what gives you the chance to figure things out for your self without any restrictions, either from yourself or other people.